

Daniel Weisberg
Testimony on Senate Bill No. 1160

Chairs Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Vice Chairs Senator Fonfara, Representative McCrory and Ranking Members Senator Boucher and Representative Giuliano and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony about Senate Bill 1160. My name is Daniel Weisberg. I am the Vice President of Policy and General Counsel at The New Teacher Project. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national nonprofit dedicated to closing the achievement gap by ensuring that high-need students get outstanding teachers. Founded by teachers in 1997, TNTP partners with school districts and states to implement scalable responses to their most acute teacher quality challenges. Since its inception, TNTP has trained or hired approximately **43,000 teachers**, benefiting an estimated **7 million students** nationwide. Today the organization is active in more than 25 cities, including 10 of the nation's 15 largest. TNTP has also released a series of acclaimed studies of the policies and practices that affect the quality of the nation's teacher workforce, including The Widget Effect (2009) and Teacher Evaluation 2.0 (2010). TNTP was also pleased to play a role in advising on the development of the nationally recognized New Haven teacher evaluation system.

We are pleased that with Senate Bill 1160, the Connecticut Assembly is taking on the critical challenge of improving teacher evaluation systems. Decades of research have shown that nothing schools can do for their students matters more than putting an effective teacher in every classroom, and creating better evaluations is a critical step toward that goal.

In its current form, however, the bill does not do nearly enough to put a rigorous, fair and accurate teacher evaluation system in place in every school—one that will give teachers the honest, useful feedback they need to do their best work, help schools recognize and retain their best teachers, and allows districts to remove teachers who consistently fail to meet expectations.

We hope that Assembly members will work with the union and other stakeholders to improve the bill so that it truly meets the needs of Connecticut's teachers and students. We encourage lawmakers to use the laws passed recently in Colorado and Illinois as models for Senate Bill 1160. Both laws established rigorous teacher evaluation systems based in part on student academic progress, and both passed with the support of state teachers' unions.